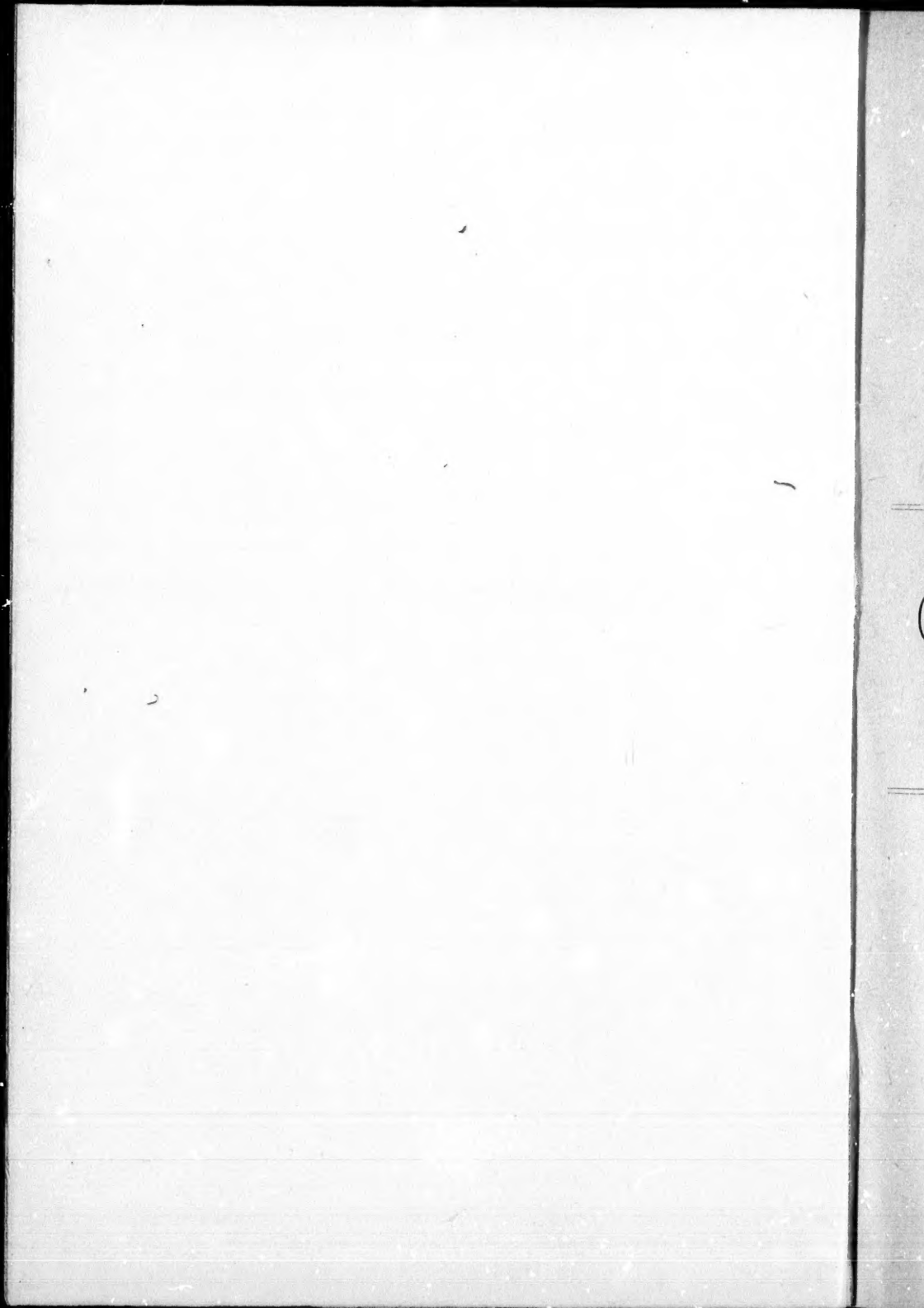




— THE —

CHRONICLE OF LONDONIA

— THE —

CITY OF THE FOREST.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

— TO —

GUMBO CANOODLE, ESQ.,

COMCKA, AFRICA.

SAINT THOMAS, 21st January, 1975.

MY DEAR CANOODLE :

You tell me that the fame of this city has reached you, even in the far-distant Comoka, and you ask me to account for its unprecedented prosperity and progress.

I can only answer you by saying that, after careful research, I have come to the conclusion that this extraordinary result can be clearly traced to the energy and foresight of its citizens, in drawing to Saint Thomas, as to a grand centre, the network of railways which threaded the country in all directions.

This enterprise was first shown nearly a century ago, when our town contained only some two thousand inhabitants. At this date our great metropolis can boast of a population of over two millions of people.

In this connection I recently made a curious discovery, which I hasten to communicate to you. Some two miles to the north of this city lie the remains of an ancient town, which, according to tradition, was called Londonia.

Knowing, of old, my antiquarian enthusiasm, you will understand with what pleasure I whiled away a leisure hour in exploring this interesting ruin, trusting that chance might some day reward my labors by the discovery of some archaeological prize. Nor was I disappointed. A few days ago I unearthed a small oaken keg, which had withstood the

ravages of time; it was securely hooped with iron, and on its end I could faintly trace the following characters.

CARLING'S

X X X

The purport of these hieroglyphics I know not, but for a brief moment I fondly hoped my guiding star had led me to a lucky find of old-world treasure. Alas! such a hope was soon dispelled. Not having a bung-starter with me, I seized a boulder, and dashed the keg to fragments. My reward was the manuscript a copy of which I now enclose you.

The narrative ends when the men of Londonia were about being led forth against Behemoth. The result, I am afraid, was disastrous to Londonia, and their loss was no doubt St. Thomas' opportunity. I must hasten to a close, as I have already missed the Balloon Express and have just time to catch the African mail, which leaves Kettlecreek by Electric Packet in a few minutes.

Believe me, my dear Canoodle,

Yours faithfully,

ANTHONY DRYSDUST.

THE CRONICLE OF LONDONIA.

CHAPTER I.

1. Behold, there was a great city in the West, which was beautiful to look upon; its streets were paved with the Cedars of Lebanon; its paths were of fine stone, and its fountains overflowed with sweet waters.

2. Its gardens and ways were planted with the Palm Tree and the Olive, the Fig and the Date, the Tulip and the Lily.

3. And it was called Londonia, or the City of the Forest.

4. Now, as the fame of this city was spread abroad, its streets were filled with traders from far countries; its merchants waxed fat, and its caravansaries were filled so that no man could lie down.

5. And everything was lovely, and the voice of the Scott Act was not heard in the land.

CHAPTER II.

1. Now, there led forth from this city many highways and roads, and they stretched to the North and the East, and to the West and to the South.

2. And the roads were of steel, and the horses thereon were of great strength and terrible to behold; their bellies were as a roaring furnace; from out of their nostrils came forth fire and smoke, and they touched not the ground as they went.

3. Also there lived in the land a great Beast, and he was possessed of the highway that led out from the City of Londonia toward the East.

4. And the name of the Beast was Behemoth, and from out his head there came a Grand Trunk, wherewith he ruled the nations.

5. And this Beast saw, as in a dream, that he should be

possessed of all the roads that led into the City of Londonia, that he might make the people thereof pay tribute unto him.

6. And he called unto him his astrologers, his wise men, and his crafty, and he loaded them with sheckels and sent them forth.

7. And ere many days had passed he heard a great noise, and a sound as of the rushing of many waters; and his messengers stood before him.

8. And they bowed down before him and said: Oh, Beast, we have possessed ourselves of all the highways that lead unto the City of Londonia, even those to the North and the South, and the West and the North-west.

9. And the Beast was much rejoiced thereat, and he smiled a smole.

CHAPTER III.

1. Now, when the people of Londonia heard of these things, they were much afraid and sorely troubled thereat, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

2. And the sound of their lamentations reached unto the far East, where dwells a Mighty Ruler, who was as a hair in neck of Behemoth.

3. And the name of this Ruler was Mammoth, and his name was as a scandal unto the nations. Yet were his ways the ways of one who is Pacific.

4. And he sent a messenger unto the City of Londonia, who gathered around him the chief rulers and wise men of the city, and took council with them.

5. And he said unto them: Oh, men of Londonia, my master is the possessor of many highways; turn your eyes to the East and to the South, and behold you will hear a sound as of many chariots, and the snort of the Horse which is of Iron.

6. And they looked to the East, and to the South, and lo, they heard the snort.

7. And they were much rejoiced thereat, and spake unto the messenger, saying: Go tell your master we will gather unto us our hewers of wood and our drawers of water, and our workers in iron and in steel; and we will build unto us an

highway leading to the South and to the East, and the name of the road shall be as the name of the London Junction.

8. And the Behemoth shall be as a broken stone in the road.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And it came to pass that the men of Londonia called unto them three head men of the city, and said unto them: Lo, we put our trust in you; build us this road, that we may not perish.

2. And the three head men answered and said, in a strange tongue: What are you giving us. Also; you bet your bottom shekel we will.

3. And the first head man was named John, the brother of Oliver, a worker in tin and sounding brass, and a trader in rags, and in bones, from which the dogs of the street had gnawed the flesh.

4. And he was a man after his kind.

5. And the second head man was named George, whose Bazar standeth over against the caravansary, whose name is as that of a Big Indian, and he was a trader in purple and fine linen, and in silk and in apparel of divers kind.

6. And he was a man of comely appearance, and of pleasant voice, and his speech unto all men was, yea, verily.

7. And the third head man was named Andrew, which came out of Adam, and he had a horn in his name. His Bazar lieth in the street to the west, which leadeth to the Great Prison, and he was a dealer in spices, and in teas, and in sugars, likewise in cod fish.

9. And his manner was as that of a Bear, and when he roared his man-servants and slaves did tremble greatly thereat.

CHAPTER V.

1. Now, when the Behemoth heard of these things, he smiled exceedingly, and his Grand Trunk was shaken with much mirth. And he called unto him his Council of the highway that leadeth to the South, out from the City of Londonia.

2. And there came unto him James, the Egandite, whose body is covered with scales, whose weight is as a grain of sand and whose measure is as the measure of a thimble.

3. Also Robert, who is as a broken Pritchard, which holdeth no water.

4. Also William, learned in the law, who liveth in the street which is called the North, who is like unto the Mole, that walketh in darkness, and whose face is covered as with a veil.

5. Also Henry, the familiar of William, who journeyed toward the Council on the back of an Ass, whose body was covered with a Green mantle.

6. And James, the cousin, who boreth into the bowels of the earth and draweth water therefrom, was not asked.

7. And the Ass, on which Henry journeyed toward the Council, was not asked, at which he waxed angry, and did bray exceedingly.

8. And when they were all come together, each man thrust his hand into his girdle and drew therefrom a tablet like unto the size of a card.

9. And after each man had looked at his hand, they all cried aloud, as with one voice, I pass.

10. And the Behemoth ordered them up.

11. And while they were yet assembled, lo, there came into them, George, the second head man of Londonia, and he sat down amongst them. And he thrust his hand into his girdle and brought forth a tablet like unto the others, and he passed.

CHAPTER VI.

1. Now, when these tidings were carried unto the other head men, they were much troubled in spirit, and did say many bitter things against the second head man.

2. And they gathered their mantles around them, and journeyed toward the Council of the highway which leadeth South.

3. Now, there was heard a great noise outside the Council Chamber, and there came a knocking at the door.

4. And when the door was opened unto them, there came into the Chamber John, the brother of Oliver, and Andrew, which came out of Adam.

5. And they turned unto George, the second head man,

and upbraided him, saying: what is this you have done unto us, and how shall we answer to those to whom we are engaged.

6. Then arose Behemoth, and taking from his girdle two tablets like unto the others, he thrust them into the hands of John, the brother of Oliver, and Andrew, which came out of Adam.

7. And the two head men were much amazed and knew not what to say, but after such time had gone by as might be measured in the beating of three seconds, they sat them down with the others and said, as if with one voice, I pass.

8. And the Great Beast again smiled a smole, and scratched his Grand Trunk with Joy, and the voice of the London Junction was heard in the land no more.

CHAPTER VII.

1. Now, when the people of the City of Londonia saw that their head man had betrayed them, they were exceeding wroth, and called in Council many of the head men of the City.

2. And there came to the Council a young warriar named Haman, the Shoe-em-ite, a maker of Sandals, who goeth into battle as the Leopard rusheth on his prey.

3. And Timothy, the High-priest, a familiar of Haman, would not come, saying: Lo, I have gathered unto me six hundred shekels, with which I would make merry withal.

4. And there came Benjamin, the Moor, a man of dark and sombre visage, learned in the law and wise in Council.

5. Also Moses the Gaul, a man of broken speech, but of much wisdom, whose Bazar lieth over against the house of Andrew, which came out of Adam.

6. Also, one who liveth in the Hall, which is of Chrystal, a potter by trade, and a maker of curious vessels, more useful than ornamental.

7. Also John, the Camelite, a builder of Chariots and of Buck-boards, a mighty Warrior, whose voice is as the voice of the Lion, and whose fangs are like unto the tusks of the Wild Boar.

8. Also Charles, the son of Adam, a money changer, a man of great strength, who hurleth the stones on the Ice so that no man can stand against him.

9. Also John, the Hatite, a Deacon of the Temple which lieth beyond the Southern Gate of the City, whose visage is as the moon at its full, and whose girth is as three ells in circumference; and he called to him Frank, his familiar and twin-Deacon of the Temple, but he would not come, saying: I pray you ex-Skuse me—I am not well.

10. Also Charles, a mighty Hunter, who, between the upper and nether mill-stones, grindeth the Corn of the nations.

11. Also Thomas, the Alchemist, surnamed the small, who destroyed his enemies with fire and brimstones.

12. Also John, the Brewer of strong waters, who what he undertaketh, accomplisheth, and in whom there is no half-and half.

13. And Jack, of the tribe of Tanks, who holdeth a lighted candle in his hand, and whose head is anointed with oil, was asked, but he would not come, saying, verily, I have received all I want, yea, more than I asked.

14. And many other men of might and wisdom, did come unto them.

15. And when they were all assembled they clamored to be led against the Behemoth.

16. And Haman, girding up his Loins, led them forth to battle, chan'ing their war song:

The hand of the traitor is on thy throat,
Londonia, O, Londonia.

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